

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

KRISTIN M PERRY, SANDRA B STIER,  
PAUL T KATAMI and JEFFREY J  
ZARRILLO

No C 09-2292 VRW  
ORDER

Plaintiffs,

v

ARNORLD SCHWARZENEGGER, in his  
official capacity as governor of  
California; EDMUND G BROWN JR, in  
his official capacity as attorney  
general of California; MARK B  
HORTON, in his official capacity  
as director of the California  
Department of Public Health and  
state registrar of vital  
statistics; LINETTE SCOTT, in her  
official capacity as deputy  
director of health information &  
strategic planning for the  
California Department of Public  
Health; PATRICK O'CONNELL, in his  
official capacity as clerk-  
recorder of the County of  
Alameda; and DEAN C LOGAN, in his  
official capacity as registrar-  
recorder/county clerk for the  
County of Los Angeles,

Defendants

DENNIS HOLLINGSWORTH, GAIL J  
KNIGHT, MARTIN F GUTIERREZ,  
HAKSHING WILLIAM TAM and MARK A  
JANSSON, as official proponents  
of Proposition 8,

Defendant-Intervenors

Plaintiffs Kristin Perry, Sandra Stier, Paul Katami and Jeffrey Zarrillo are California residents in same-sex relationships who applied for marriage licenses in California in May 2009. Doc #1 at ¶32-33. Plaintiffs' applications were denied because the California constitution provides that "only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California." Cal Const art I § 7.5. Plaintiffs seek equitable and declaratory relief that section 7.5, recently enacted in California by ballot initiative as Proposition 8 ("Prop 8"), violates the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. Doc #1. On May 27, 2009, plaintiffs moved for a preliminary injunction to halt enforcement of Prop 8. Doc #7.

# I

To seek intervention as of right under FRCP 24(a), applicants must make a four-part showing: (1) their motion is timely; (2) they have a significant protectible interest relating

1 to the transaction that is the subject of the action; (3) they are  
2 so situated that the disposition of the action may practically  
3 impair or impede their ability to protect their interest; and (4)  
4 their interest is not adequately represented by the parties to the  
5 action. Donnelly v Glickman, 159 F3d 405, 409 (9th Cir 1998).

6 Generally, the court should be "guided primarily by practical and  
7 equitable considerations" and should "interpret the requirements  
8 broadly in favor of intervention." Id at 409 (citation omitted).

9         The proponents of Prop 8 meet all four of FRCP 24(a)'s  
10 criteria: (1) their motion to intervene is timely, filed just days  
11 after plaintiffs filed the complaint; (2) as official proponents,  
12 they have a significant protectible interest in defending Prop 8's  
13 constitutionality; (3) their interest in upholding Prop 8 is  
14 directly affected by this lawsuit; and (4) their interest is not  
15 represented by another party, as no defendant has argued that Prop  
16 8 is constitutional. See Docs ##27, 30, 39, 46. Significantly,  
17 with respect to the last factor, although the responsibilities of  
18 the Attorney General of California contemplate that he shall  
19 enforce the state's laws in accordance with constitutional  
20 limitations, Cal Const art V § 13, see also Cal Govt Code §§ 12511,  
21 12512, Attorney General Brown has informed the court that he  
22 believes Prop 8 is unconstitutional. Doc #39 at 2.

23         Because the proponents have established their entitlement  
24 to intervene as of right, the court GRANTS the proponents' motion  
25 to intervene as defendants.

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## II

The court turns now to plaintiffs' motion for a preliminary injunction. Because entering a preliminary injunction may raise novel concerns that could be avoided through a prompt decision on the merits, the court's tentative plan is instead to proceed expeditiously to trial, a decision on the merits and final judgment.

## A

Defendants' positions regarding the preliminary injunction vary. Los Angeles County registrar-recorder Dean C Logan and Alameda County clerk-recorder Patrick O'Connell take no position on the motion. Docs ##27, 30. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, along with Public Health Director Mark B Horton and Deputy Director Linette Scott, argue against a preliminary injunction because of prudential considerations - specifically, that same-sex marriages performed after the injunction but before a decision on the merits may not be recognized under state law. Doc #33 at 8-10. Attorney General Brown opposes the preliminary injunction because of uncertainty surrounding the validity of post-injunction same-sex marriages. Doc #34. As noted, Brown agrees with plaintiffs that Prop 8 violates the federal Constitution. Doc #39 at 2.

To obtain a preliminary injunction, plaintiffs must show they have raised a serious question on the merits and that the balance of hardships tips sharply in their favor. Department of Parks and Recreation v Bazaar Del Mundo, Inc, 448 F3d 1118, 1123 (9th Cir 2006). Brown's stance that Prop 8 violates the

1 Constitution may well suffice to establish a serious question on  
2 the merits. See Doc #39 at 2. Furthermore, plaintiffs have  
3 alleged a violation of their constitutional rights, which alone can  
4 demonstrate irreparable harm. Goldie's Bookstore, Inc v Superior  
5 Court, 739 F2d 466, 472 (9th Cir 1984).

6 Governor Schwarzenegger has pointed out that "California  
7 and its citizens have already confronted the uncertainty that  
8 results when marriage licenses are issued in a gender-neutral  
9 manner prior to the issuance of a final, judicial determination of  
10 legal and constitutional issues." Doc #33 at 2. The governor  
11 avers that in early 2004, shortly before the California Supreme  
12 Court's decision in Lockyer v City and County of San Francisco, 33  
13 Cal 4th 1055 (2004), some 4,000 same-sex marriages were performed  
14 in California. In the period between the California Supreme  
15 Court's decision in In re Marriage Cases, 43 Cal 4th 757 (2008) and  
16 the passage of Prop 8, numerous other same-sex marriages were  
17 performed. The validity of those marriages remained unclear until  
18 the California Supreme Court issued its decision in Strauss v  
19 Horton, 46 Cal 4th 364 (2009).

20 Given that serious questions are raised in these  
21 proceedings, issuance of preliminary injunctive relief on an  
22 incomplete record may inject still further uncertainty in an  
23 important area of concern and interest to the state and its  
24 citizens. To avoid the procedural and practical problems  
25 surrounding a preliminary injunction, the court is inclined to  
26 proceed directly and expeditiously to the merits of plaintiffs'  
27 claims and to determine, on a complete record, whether injunctive  
28 relief may be appropriate.

B

To reach a decision on the merits, it appears that the court will need to resolve certain underlying factual disputes raised by the parties. The court has identified several questions from the parties' submissions to be resolved at trial. While the issues identified by the parties and discussed below are by no means exhaustive of the issues in this case, the breadth of factual disputes raised by the parties supports the court's plan to proceed directly to trial.

The parties disagree regarding the standard of review the court should apply to plaintiffs' equal protection and due process claims. Compare Doc #7 at 11 (suggesting that under the Due Process Clause, Prop 8 is subject to strict scrutiny) and 18 (arguing that gays and lesbians are a suspect class for equal protection purposes) with Doc #36 at 17 (arguing that Prop 8 does not affect a fundamental right under the Due Process Clause and must therefore only survive rational basis review) and 30 (arguing that gays and lesbians are not a suspect class).

The facts necessary to establish the appropriate level of scrutiny under the Equal Protection Clause have been adverted to in the parties' submissions but have not been adequately briefed, nor have these facts been established on an adequate evidentiary record. The factors, of course, derive from the Supreme Court's formulation in United States v Carolene Products Co, 304 US 144, 153 n4 (1938). See also Varnum v Brien, 763 NW2d 862, 887 (Iowa 2009) (synthesizing federal precedent and listing the factors used to determine whether a classification should receive heightened scrutiny). In the context of the present case, the relevant

1 factors appear to include: (1) the history of discrimination gays  
2 and lesbians have faced; (2) whether the characteristics defining  
3 gays and lesbians as a class might in any way affect their ability  
4 to contribute to society; (3) whether sexual orientation can be  
5 changed, and if so, whether gays and lesbians should be encouraged  
6 to change it; and (4) the relative political power of gays and  
7 lesbians, including successes of both pro-gay and anti-gay  
8 legislation. The parties have also averted to facts, such as the  
9 history of marriage and whether and why its confines may have  
10 evolved over time, that may be necessary to determine whether the  
11 right asserted by plaintiffs is "deeply rooted in this Nation's  
12 history and tradition" and thus subject to strict scrutiny under  
13 the Due Process Clause. Washington v Glucksberg, 521 US 702, 721  
14 (1997) (citations omitted).

15 In support of their argument that Prop 8 is  
16 constitutional, the intervenors have raised state interests that  
17 appear to require evidentiary support. Doc #8 at 17-18 (citing  
18 state interests asserted in In re Marriage Cases, 43 Cal 4th at 784  
19 and Hernandez v Robles, 7 NY3d 338 (2006)). To determine whether  
20 the asserted state interests can survive plaintiffs' constitutional  
21 challenge, the record may need to establish: (1) the longstanding  
22 definition of marriage in California; (2) whether the exclusion of  
23 same-sex couples from marriage leads to increased stability in  
24 opposite-sex marriage or alternatively whether permitting same-sex  
25 couples to marry destabilizes opposite-sex marriage; (3) whether a  
26 married mother and father provide the optimal child-rearing  
27 environment and whether excluding same-sex couples from marriage  
28 promotes this environment; and (4) whether and how California has

1 acted to promote these interests in other family law contexts.

2         The parties' submissions raise the question whether or  
3 not Prop 8 discriminates based on sexual orientation or gender or  
4 both. Compare Doc #7 at 20, 21 (citing In re Marriage Cases, 43  
5 Cal 4th at 840, to argue it is "sophist to suggest" that Prop 8  
6 does not discriminate against gays and lesbians) with Doc #36 at  
7 29, 32 (citing Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio v Buckeye Comm Found, 538 US  
8 194 (2003), for the proposition that Prop 8 has a disparate impact  
9 on gays and lesbians but does not discriminate against them as a  
10 class); see also Doc #52 at 17 (asserting that plaintiffs have  
11 suffered psychological harm because Prop 8 directs state-sanctioned  
12 discrimination at them based their sexual orientation). In  
13 addition to the particular facts pertaining to the parties at bar,  
14 resolution of this dispute may depend on: (1) the history and  
15 development of California's ban on same-sex marriage; (2) whether  
16 the availability of opposite-sex marriage is a meaningful option  
17 for gays and lesbians; (3) whether the ban on same-sex marriage  
18 meaningfully restricts options available to heterosexuals; and (4)  
19 whether requiring one man and one woman in marriage promotes  
20 stereotypical gender roles.

21         Finally, the parties have raised a question whether Prop  
22 8 was passed with a discriminatory intent. Doc #7 at 18 (arguing  
23 that the sole motivation for Prop 8 was moral disapproval of gays  
24 and lesbians) with Doc #8 at 17-18 (arguing various state interests  
25 in preventing same-sex couples from marrying). The question of  
26 discriminatory intent may inform the court's equal protection  
27 analysis. Romer v Evans, 517 US 620, 631-32 (1996); Vil of  
28 Arlington Heights v Metro Housing Dev, 429 US 252, 266-67 (1977).



1 To resolve the question, the court may have to consider the  
2 "immediate objective" and "ultimate effect" of Prop 8, along with  
3 its "historical context and the conditions existing prior to its  
4 enactment," Reitman v Mulkey, 387 US 369, 373 (1967), which in this  
5 case may require the record to establish: (1) the voters'  
6 motivation or motivations for supporting Prop 8, including  
7 advertisements and ballot literature considered by California  
8 voters; and (2) the differences in actual practice of registered  
9 domestic partnerships, civil unions and marriage, including whether  
10 married couples are treated differently from domestic partners in  
11 governmental and non-governmental contexts.

12           The just, speedy and inexpensive determination of these  
13 issues would appear to call for proceeding promptly to trial.  
14 Although the court will entertain any party's objection to  
15 proceeding promptly to trial without deciding plaintiff's request  
16 for preliminary injunctive relief, the court believes that a case  
17 management conference would likely be a more productive endeavor at  
18 the hearing scheduled for July 2, 2009 at 10 AM. At that time, the  
19 court will solicit the parties' views on the matters described in  
20 FRCP 16(c)(2), as well as scheduling necessary to complete pretrial  
21 preparation and the speedy disposition of these proceedings on the  
22 merits.

23  
24 IT IS SO ORDERED.



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26  
27 VAUGHN R WALKER  
28 United States District Chief Judge